



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Elections in Belarus

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Paul Jones
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
August 6, 2004

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States would also like to take this opportunity to again urge the Government of Belarus to implement the commitment that it made to OSCE Chairman in Office Passy to issue as soon as possible a written invitation to ODIHR to observe the country's October parliamentary election and to implement swiftly ODIHR's recommendations on reforming electoral procedures.

As ODIHR has noted in the past, timely invitations are critical to its ability to efficiently organize observation missions, and key reforms to electoral procedures as specified in ODIHR's June 2004 election needs assessment report are essential to ensure a democratic election.

Since Mr. Lukashenko, in his annual address in April to Parliament, pledged that the parliamentary elections will be "open, civilized, and democratic," Belarus should have nothing to hide from international election observers, nor any reason to stymie electoral reforms. With the Belarus parliamentary election only two and a half months away, there should be no further delay on the part of authorities in Minsk.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman